

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

September 25, 2018



Israel-Palestinian Peace Process Is Dead—But, Tragically, Palestinians Never Say Die

Dear Friend of FLAME:

This week marks the 25th anniversary of the Oslo Peace Accords, which, despite all the hope it engendered at the time, was doomed to failure.

Above all, Palestinian strongman Yasser Arafat (actually an Egyptian), who signed the agreement, was too smart by half. He saw the Accords simply as a way to take a few steps closer to conquering Israel. Thus it's no wonder that Palestinian Arab violence killed more Israelis in the five years following Oslo than in the 15 years preceding it.

But such misjudgments and misreadings of history have plagued the Palestinians ever since the Jews began the Zionist push to resettle their ancestral homelands in the late 19th century.

Without recapping the entire 130-year history of Palestinian Arab errors, we can see these missteps playing themselves out still today. Forget that the Palestinians could have had a state in 2001 and 2008, when Israel made astoundingly (foolishly!) generous offers of land for peace and a capital in Jerusalem. Forget that the Palestinians boycotted peace talks under President Obama, an unprecedented advocate for the Arab cause.

Instead, let's just focus on the present. Now the Palestinians have snubbed the current U.S. President, who doesn't take kindly to disrespect. Mr. Trump also doesn't see the business sense of funding terrorists—to the tune of billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars—who refuse to negotiate or give up their sacred cows of paying salaries to convicted (or killed-in-the-act) Arab murderers, advocating jihad in elementary schools and falsely representing five million of their

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Peace with Palestinian Dictators?

Governments of the Palestinians' two ruling dictatorships are in shambles—and at war with each other. How can Israel possibly achieve peace with them at this time?

Neither the Palestinian Authority in Judea Samaria (the West Bank) nor the Islamic State group (ISIS) in Gaza has held elections since 2006, and the two factions are battling one another in a vicious power struggle. How will we recognize the Jewish state or accept Israeli offers of peace?

What are the facts?

While Israel, with the United States, made generous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians in 2001 and 2008—and left the entire Gaza Strip to the Arabs in 2005—neither of the two major Palestinian groups has accepted Israeli offers... or even the right to exist. What's more, both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas governments are in obvious, expanding processes of waging a bitter internal war. Could these warring Arab factions reconcile—and accept Israel as their neighbor—it's impossible to imagine a peace agreement arising from this.

International Palestinian Movement Following Israel's repudiation of five attacking Arab armies in 1967, Arabia is Palestine beyond the autonomous Palestinian Liberation Organization, under Egyptian Yasser Arafat. Arafat inspired the First Intifada, a terrorist guerrilla effort against Israel, which ended with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. Under these accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) would have been created, with Arafat as its leader. Arafat was assassinated in 2004, and his death was followed by a power struggle between Arafat's son, Mahmoud Abbas, and Arafat's former deputy, Yasser Arafat's son-in-law, Ismail Haniyeh. Abbas was elected president of the PA in a 2005 election, but he held the job for only one year. Today's Palestinian Authority is still with corruption, its economy is effectively bankrupt, it refuses those unemployment of 20%, and without foreign subsidies it would collapse.

Despite its charter under the Oslo Agreement to make peace with Israel, the PA has remained dedicated to warring all of the Holy Land from Jewish control. It has demanded that all Arab refugees from Israel's War of Independence in 1948—no matter how many—be admitted to Israel. It has demanded that all Arab refugees from Israel's War of Independence in 1948—no matter how many—be admitted to Israel. It has demanded that all Arab refugees from Israel's War of Independence in 1948—no matter how many—be admitted to Israel.

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FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

people as refugees.

In return, Trump has cut all American funding—about a third of total foreign funding—to the Palestinians. He's also just shut down their "embassy" in Washington. The Palestinians remain belligerent.

The Palestinians are now losing favor among fellow Arabs and Muslims as well. They receive very little financial support from their brethren, and, weary of Palestinian diplomatic failures, Arab states are now slowly drawing closer to Israel in solidarity against a common enemy, Iran.

As journalist David Ignatius put it recently in the *Washington Post*,

"The Palestinians are among modern history's biggest losers. You can argue that it's their own fault—that they kept balking at the peace deal that Israel would accept in hopes that if they waited and kept agitating, they could get more. The four-year-plus "intifada" that followed the Oslo agreement was a self-destructive waste for the Palestinians, poisoning good feeling in Israel. The same is true of Gaza, which greeted Israeli evacuation with continuing, self-defeating attempts to kill Israelis."

Which brings us to this week's featured FLAME *Hotline* article (see below), a bare-knuckled analysis by Mitchell Bard, executive director of the American-Israel Cooperative Enterprise and the Jewish Virtual Library.

Bard argues that the Palestinians have just burned too many bridges, used up nearly all the credit they had. They've cried "wolf" and claimed the sky was falling so often, lied in the face of obvious truth so many times, that sympathy is drying up. Indeed, the most plentiful source of energy for the Palestinian cause has long been burning anti-Zionist hatred in Europe and the American Left—a power not to be underestimated.

Finally, Bard concludes that the Palestinians will never have peace until the Palestinian people demand it not from Israel, but from their hapless Arab leaders. *Amen* (and good luck) to that.

I hope you'll forward this sad, tragic—but also pathetic—analysis to friends, family and fellow congregants to help them understand why the failure to achieve an Israel-Palestinian peace lies squarely and indisputably at the feet of the Arabs.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaigns exposing another source of Palestinian failure—their dueling dictatorships in Gaza and the West Bank. I hope you agree with and will support this message.

editorial *hasbarah* messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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**FLAME'S WEEKLY
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FLAME's Hotline e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the most important pro-Israel advocacy issues and features our choice of the week's most informative and thought-provoking article on Israel and the Middle East. If you only subscribe to one pro-Israel news service, make it the FLAME Hotline.

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Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. You've probably read about the new peace plan expected from the Trump administration, possibly coming in next months. We at FLAME believe such a proposal—no matter what its tenets—will be a mistake, if for no other reason than that the autocratic governments of both Palestinian factions are currently unequipped and unsuited to be Israel's partners in peace. That's why FLAME has created a new *editorial message*—"[Peace with Palestinian Dictators?](#)"—which is running in mainstream magazines and newspapers, including college newspapers. In addition, it will be sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on the true obstacle to peace, which is the lack of a credible Palestinian peace partner.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).

The Palestinian Victimhood Narrative No Longer Sells

[by Mitchell Bard](#), Algemeiner, September 14, 2018

After decades of accepting the idea that Palestinians deserve American financial assistance without offering anything in return, President Trump has finally said, "Enough." Fed up with their lies and obduracy, he decided the Palestinians are not entitled to US taxpayer dollars to pay terrorists, support phony refugees, and line the pockets of corrupt leaders who enrich themselves, their families, and their cronies.

Cutting aid to UNRWA was long overdue because UNRWA is a poster child for the fraudulence of Palestinian claims. UNRWA has invented five million refugees and created a welfare system to guarantee their perpetual misery. The refugee problem could have been solved decades ago, as UNRWA originally envisioned, if the leaders in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria gave the Palestinians citizenship, took them out of camps, and allowed them to assimilate into their societies, where they already shared a common language, religion, and culture.

And how can anyone justify the fact that *Palestinian leaders* keep their people confined to camps. After Israel evacuated Gaza, the Palestinians said that they would build housing for refugees on the rubble of the settlements, and received billions of dollars for the project. I don't think a single house was built for a single refugee.

Where did the money go?

To Hamas, for building rockets and tunnels, and taking care of themselves at the expense of the people. Perhaps one day the refugees will grow tired of uselessly railing against Israel, and protest their jailors from Fatah and Hamas.

The Palestinians' enablers immediately predicted the loss of US funding would create a humanitarian catastrophe in the territories. But where are the other 190 countries in the world that could fill the gap? Most of these countries declare their fealty to the Palestinian cause and vote for every UN resolution that feeds Palestinian fantasies. Of course, casting a vote is easy, because it costs them nothing. If they really cared, do you really believe a coalition of states, or the EU alone, could not replace the few hundred million dollars the United States was providing? The Arab oil producers could fund the Palestinian Authority's annual budget out of a week's oil revenues.

What if all the groups and individuals promoting the antisemitic boycott of Israel gave money to help the Palestinians rather than spending their money on convincing artists not to perform in Israel, pushing propaganda on college campuses, or interfering with employment opportunities for Palestinians who want to work for Israelis? I'm sure Roger Waters, Viggo Mortensen, Penelope Cruz, and the other thousand or so celebrity BDS advocates could come up with enough money to take care of the people they claim to care for so much.

Come to think of it, why haven't the Palestinians, who love to copy the pro-Israel community's ideas, sold Palestine Bonds. Israel raises more than \$1 billion from donors in the US alone. Surely all the supporters of JVP and SJP, CAIR, and the other groups professing concern for the Palestinians would rush to their brokers

to buy Palestine Bonds.

But the PA has no money to repay the bondholders. Maybe if tens of millions of dollars were not going to pay terrorists in Israeli jails and the families of martyrs they could have a bond campaign. But, if they did raise money from bonds, would the corrupt Palestinian leaders just embezzle it and continue to pay the terrorists?

People complaining about Trump have forgotten that the Palestinians conceded nothing to Obama. To the contrary, the Palestinians grew more obstinate in reaction to Obama's sympathy for their cause. Mahmoud Abbas, who had been negotiating with Ehud Olmert before Obama took office, refused to negotiate with Benjamin Netanyahu for his entire term.

Obama followed the tired, cliched playbook that produced 70 years of failure in US diplomacy. Trump's team is blowing up the entire Arabist approach. Unlike their predecessors, they understand the Palestinians' negotiating strategy has been to secure Israeli compromises without making any of their own. They would then use the last Israeli position as the starting point for new talks, aimed at drawing further concessions from their interlocutors.

According to *The New Yorker's* Adam Entous, Jared Kushner, Jason Greenblatt, and David Friedman compare the Palestinians' decision to reject Israel's previous offers to missing out on a chance to buy Google stock 20 years ago. Now it's too late to get the old price, and they must pay a lot more in return.

Equally important, Trump has smashed the sacred cows of the peace process—Jerusalem and refugees. The Arabists believed that Israel needed to re-divide Jerusalem and predicted an apocalypse when Trump decided to take Jerusalem off the table by recognizing it as Israel's capital. Once again, they were wrong. Trump's move was critical to disabusing the Palestinians of their fantasies of solely claiming Jerusalem as their capital city.

The Arabists bought into the Palestinian narrative about five million refugees expelled in the *Nakba*, and expected Israel to accept at least a limited "right of return," knowing that this was suicide for Israel as a Jewish state. Trump, however, refuses to accept the UNRWA definition of refugees and the administration is calculating a realistic figure for the actual number of refugees—probably more like 150-200,000—that would be near the 100,000 number that Israel has long offered to accept on a humanitarian basis.

Israel will be expected to make concessions, including perhaps evacuating some settlements, but these will likely be consistent with past Israeli offers.

With the exception of the fanatics in Tehran who care about the Palestinians only to the extent that they can be used to advance Iranian interests and threaten Israel, most Arab and Muslim leaders have grown tired of the Palestinian issue. Arab leaders were said to fear the "Arab street" rising up against them if they dared abandon the Palestinian cause. It was always a myth. When the street did not react after the US recognized Jerusalem and moved its embassy, the lack of concern for the Palestinians became clearer than ever.

Trump's peace plan is unlikely to succeed, but this has nothing to do with the elements of the plan and everything to do with Palestinian irredentism. From an ideological, Islamic, psychological, and political standpoint, the Palestinians have no desire for peace with Israel.

Ideologically, the Palestinians are led by the old guard that has never been psychologically capable of abandoning the idea of liberating all of "Palestine," which means they are no more willing to give up Haifa than they are Jerusalem. From the Islamic standpoint, it is inconceivable that what the Palestinians consider Muslim land should be ruled by Jews or that dhimmis can rule over Muslims. Psychologically, the Palestinians feel aggrieved, consider the establishment of Israel the "original sin," and need to feel their grievances (such as acknowledging the "right of return") are addressed.

Politically, surveys indicate the Palestinian public has little interest in peace without Israeli capitulation—and even if they felt differently, they have no say under their dictatorial leaders.

The Palestinians deserve better, but, as *The Wall Street Journal* editorialized, "If the Palestinians want to be treated with the respect of a peace partner, they have to first show a desire for peace." And it really has to start with the Palestinian people, who are suffering and discontented with the denial of their civil and human rights by their leaders, but have vented that frustration on Israel. They will have to redirect their kites and rocks and bombs at the Muqata in Ramallah, and the headquarters of Hamas. They will have to demand control of their future and abandon the ideology, religious fanaticism, and politics of the past, and open themselves to new opportunities.

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